

TNCA
VOC FOR IOP/FH
NEWS ANALYSIS NO. 1-1798
CHARLES MEDD

NOVEMBER 19, 1976

WASHINGTON IN TRANSITION

ANNCR:

ONE WEEK AFTER ELECTION DAY, WASHINGTON IS QUIETLY AWAITING THE SHIFT FROM ONE PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION TO ANOTHER. CHARLES MEDD LOOKS AT A CITY IN TRANSITION.

VOICE:

AMERICANS THINK OF WASHINGTON AS A SMALL, ONE-COMPANY TOWN THAT RELIES ON A SINGLE EMPLOYER, THE GOVERNMENT, FOR A LIVING AND A HANDFUL OF TRANSIENTS, THE POLITICIANS, FOR EXCITEMENT. OUTSIDERS LIKE TO SAY IT'S A NICE PLACE TO VISIT -- THEY SEEM TO APPRECIATE THE SCENERY -- BUT NO PLACE TO STAY FOR LONG, SINCE WHATEVER EXCITEMENT THERE IS CAN BE ENJOYED FROM A DISTANCE. TODAY, WITH THE ELECTIONS OVER AND THE POLITICIANS GONE, THESE CRITICS WOULD SURELY FIND LITTLE HERE TO ENTERTAIN THEM.

FOR THE MOMENT, WASHINGTON IS INDEED QUIET. PRESIDENT FORD IS OFF GOLFING AND RESTING IN CALIFORNIA BEFORE RETURNING FOR HIS FINAL DAYS IN OFFICE. MEANWHILE, PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER IS ON A SMALL ISLAND NEAR HIS NATIVE GEORGIA, ABSORBING THE SUN ALONG WITH DETAILED BRIEFINGS ON THE NEW JOB HE SOON INHERITS. AND THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS -- BOTH THOSE WHO WEATHERED THE ELECTIONS AND THOSE WHO MADE IT FOR FIRST TIME -- ARE STILL OUT OF TOWN WAITING FOR THE NEW TERM TO BEGIN.

BUT FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE AND COMMUTE DAILY TO AND FROM THEIR JOBS AT THE VARIOUS FEDERAL AGENCIES, IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL. EVEN WITH THE ABSENCE OF THIS TOWN'S PRINCIPAL ACTORS, THE WHEEL OF GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO TURN. AND WHILE NEW POLICY DIRECTIONS CAN BE EXPECTED ONCE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TAKES OVER, THEY WILL BE CARRIED OUT FOR THE MOST PART BY A FAMILIAR CAST OF CHARACTERS.

IF UNEXCITING TO OTHERS, THIS BRIEF INTERLUDE IS WELCOME IN WASHINGTON. TOGETHER WITH THE REST OF THE NATION, THE LOCAL INHABITANTS ARE NO LONGER RIVETED TO THEIR TELEVISION SETS TRYING TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF THIS OR THAT CANDIDATE'S LATEST SPEECH, OR THE MEANING OF THE LATEST PUBLIC OPINION POLL. INSTEAD, THEY ARE NOW SPECULATING ABOUT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION THEY WILL SOON SERVE, AND THE NEWCOMER FROM GEORGIA WHO WILL BE RUNNING THINGS FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

BUT THE INTERLUDE, THIS PERIOD OF QUIET SPECULATION, WON'T LAST FOR LONG. WHEN JIMMY CARTER ARRIVES IN JANUARY ALONG WITH THE NEXT CONGRESS, THE TEMPO OF WASHINGTON LIFE WILL AGAIN PICK UP. WITH A NEW WAVE OF POLITICIANS AND APPOINTEES ON HAND, THERE WILL BE EXCITEMENT ONCE MORE, AN EXPERIENCE THIS SMALL TOWN HAS BEEN THROUGH BEFORE AND IS MORE THAN LIKELY TO SURVIVE.

-0-

JS/RTD